

## *Carex norvegica* Retz.

Norway sedge

Cyperaceae (Sedge Family)

**Status:** State Sensitive

**Rank:** G5S2

**General Description:** Adapted from FNA (2002): *Carex norvegica* is a densely matted perennial sedge with stems that are 2 to 13 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (5 to 35 cm) tall. The stems have short stiff hairs that create a rough texture toward the top of the stem. The leaves are 1/16 to 1/8 in. (2 to 3 mm) wide. The bracts of the inflorescence are shorter than or exceed the inflorescences. The spikes are globose or oblong, 1/8 to 1/4 in. (4 to 10 mm) long, and 1/8 to 1/4 in. (3 to 6 mm) wide. There are 1 to 3 lateral pistillate spikes that are erect and short-pedunculate. The last two spikes on the stem are overlapping, forming dense terminal clusters. The terminal spike has both pistillate and staminate flowers. The pistillate scales are dark brown or black with thin margins, and they are shorter or equal to the perigynia. The perigynia are ascending, green, becoming dark brown or purple-black, veinless, elliptic or obovate, 1/16 to 1/8 in. (2 to 2.5 mm) long, 1/32 to 1/16 in. (1.25 to 1.5 mm) wide, and often finely serrate toward the tip. The tip is abruptly beaked. The beak is less than 1/16 in. (0.2 to 0.3 mm) long and has 2 shallow teeth.

**Identification Tips:** *Carex norvegica* is most closely related to *Carex parryana*. Their spikes, pistillate scales, and habitat can distinguish these two species. The spikes of *C. norvegica* are relatively short, its terminal spike is 1/4 to 1/2 in. (6 to 14 mm) long, its pistillate scales are very dark, blackish purple or brownish black, and it grows in montane areas. The spikes of *C. parryana* are longer than those of *C. norvegica*, its terminal spike is 1/4 to 1-1/8 in. (10 to 30 mm) long, its pistillate scales are brown or straw colored and not at all blackish, and this species is found in foothills and plains.

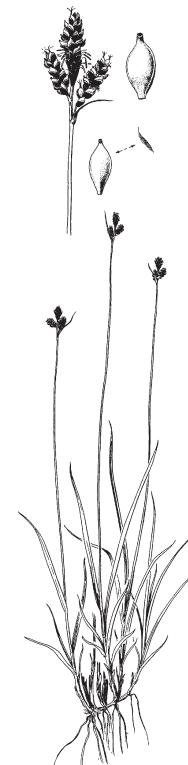
**Phenology:** *Carex norvegica* is in fruit from July to August.

**Range:** This circumboreal species is found throughout Canada, in Eurasia, Greenland, Alaska, and the continental U.S. In Washington *Carex norvegica* has been found in Okanogan County.

**Habitat:** In Washington, this species is found near perennial streams and ponds and in moist meadows at an elevation of 4900 to 7120 ft (1494 to 2170 m). Associated species include sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* spp.), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), willows (*Salix* spp.), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), single delight (*Pyrola uniflora*), western Labrador tea (*Ledum glandulosum*), and bunchberry dogwood (*Cornus canadensis*).

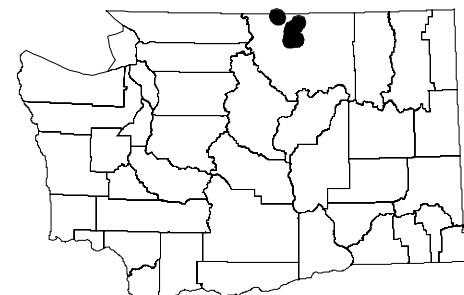
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Known distribution  
of *Carex norvegica*  
in Washington



● Current (1980+)

○ Historic (older than 1980)

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**Ecology:** The species appears at mossy margins of wetlands where *Carex disperma* grows, and where *Carex scopulorum* var. *prionophylla* is not dominant.

**State Status Comments:** This species is known from under 20 occurrences in a limited geographic area.

**Inventory Needs:** Stream banks, seepage areas, moist meadows, and ponds in Okanogan County should be systematically surveyed for additional populations. Known occurrences should be revisited.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Current threats to the species include grazing by cattle and trampling by recreational users.

**Comments:** Hitchcock et. al (1969) do not give any subspecific designation to *Carex norvegica* Retz. Recently the following have been recognized as valid subspecies of *Carex norvegica*: ssp. *inferalpina* (Wahlenb.) Hulten, ssp. *inserrulata* (Kalela), ssp. *norvegica* Retz., and ssp. *stevenii* (Holm) E. Murr. Our specimens of *C. norvegica* have been examined, and they appear closest to ssp. *stevenii* (Holm) Murray (Arnett 1997).

### References:

Arnett, J. and E. Gehling. 1997. Draft species conservation strategy for *Carex norvegica* Retz. in Washington. Unpublished. On file with WNHPC.

Flora of North America Editorial Committee eds. 2002. *Flora of North America North of Mexico Volume 23: Magnoliophyta: Commelinidae (in part): Cyperaceae*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. 608 pp.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1969. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 1: Vascular Cryptogams, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 914 pp.